V. Study Recommendations

Work Measurement and Workload/Caseload Standards Recommendations

Measured workload results in this study point to discrepancies between the existing caseload standards used by CDSS to budget staff and allocated funds for casework FTEs in the state. In the major program areas of Emergency Response Screening and Intake (ERA), Emergency Response (ER), Family Maintenance (FM), Family Reunification (FR) and Permanent Placement (PP), measured work clearly suggests that many cases are either not served or underserved each month. In other words, many cases are being carried, but not worked. These discrepancies range from one or two cases per month in Emergency Response to nearly 30 cases per month in the Permanent Placement program.

The large discrepancies in the numbers of permanent placement cases that receive services are of special concern since inattention to such cases may prevent many children from attaining permanent homes. This is especially important in the presence of recent federal changes in the form of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. Among other features of this legislation are reductions in the time frames for termination of parental rights, leaving the potential for a larger number of children waiting for permanent homes.

The measured workload suggests that in all the basic CWS program areas that workers are operating in an environment that can address emergent cases, but that cases not requiring immediate attention receive little, if any, attention. In addition, other necessary or important services such as foster care recruitment, collaborative services, and out-of- town inquiries cannot be included in the existing budgetary and allocation system, as these services are not routinely counted by the statewide information system. This further demand on worker time exacerbates the pressure on the time needed to provide services to the CWS basic program.

Feedback from workers throughout the state in the standards-setting groups provides basic guidelines for the amount of time needed to provide services in all areas. The minimum standards reflect the experience of these workers regarding the additional time needed to provide the services. An often-repeated concern by workers who participated in the core workload study and in the focus groups was the need to perform multiple tasks simultaneously in order to keep up with the demands on their time. This raises managerial concerns since sustained activity of

this nature may lead to burnout. The optimum standards reflect the views of these workers regarding the time needed so that each case would meet basic program requirements and allow for the follow-up that would result in improved outcomes for these cases.

Finally, noncase-related time for new workers to meet anticipated training and staff development needs are insufficient. A key adjustment to noncase-related time for new workers will be essential to insure that cases are adequately served and that adequate time is available for training.

1. Work Measurement and Workload/Caseload Standards Recommendations

1.1. Consider implementing the minimum standards for case-related time as soon as possible for at least some program areas.

Minimum standards for all CWS basic services are found in Section IV. a) Policy-Related and Optimum Standards. Implementation entails adjustments to the PCAB process and the resulting budgetary and allocation adjustment. More specific recommendations to the PCAB process are described below. This also entail a recommendation to county agencies that the standards be implemented at the county level so that resources are accessed in the form of county-match levels and applied as intended to workload relief.

1.1.1 Review the optimum standards and prioritize them for possible long-term implementation based on achievement of outcome criteria.

The optimum standards reflect the expectation that cases would be served well enough to significantly improve the quality of services and improve outcomes for children and families. Ideally, outcomes would be improved by implementing the minimum standards. However, implementation of the optimum standards provides the opportunity to address outcomes for specific programs by prioritizing service areas where significantly improved outcomes are desirable. Thus, increasing the standard for family reunification to the optimum level could be tied to the potential desirability of increasing the numbers of children who return home and are able to remain home safely. Optimum standards for all CWS basic programs are found in Section IV. a) Policy-Related and Optimum Standards.

2. Child Welfare Services Staff Tenure and Training Needs Recommendation

2.1. Consider the need to adjust standards for noncase-related time to address training and staff development needs.

Increase noncase-related time for workers with less than 6 months of CWS experience to allow for training. The number of hours available for training should be increased by 31 hours per month for these workers and the resulting case-related time decreased accordingly.

2.2. Devise and implement a special recruitment plan to address likely staff shortages.

One implication of the evaluation is that if implemented, considerable demands will be placed on recruiting and hiring new staff. Therefore, a plan to address these likely shortages will be essential in order to obtain support from the secondary education system and other appropriate personnel resources.

Data external to this study indicate that increased staff recruitment and retention may be necessary to achieve needed staffing levels. At the same time that the SB 2030 workload study is showing a need for increased staffing for California child welfare services, all employers nationally, especially state and local governments, are finding it harder and harder to find entry-level staff. According to a recent report by Samuel M. Ehrenhalt, of the Rockefeller Institute of Government in Albany, New York, this scarcity of potential workers is due to an expanding economy and the slowing of the growth of the labor force. This means that it could be difficult in the future merely to maintain current levels of staffing. For example, since university-educated social workers are one of the most likely groups from which to find qualified candidates for these positions, the plan could include a coordinated effort between the department and the state university system to increase recruitment and training of social workers. The department may also need to rely on recruiting more non-social work degree candidates and provide the additional needed social work training, even if it means expanding the training period and thus the length of the less productive phase of a new workers tenure.

Budget Methodology Recommendations

In the past 20 years, two different budget methodologies have been used in crafting state child welfare services budgets. Neither has been considered a "best" way to budget. In the past five years, alternative methodologies for funding child welfare services, requiring the revision of funding, have been recommended, but none have been approved.

So long as the state is responsible for state and federal funding and compliance-consistent methods to define requirements, collect data and broad uniform direction will continue to be required. The counties, by virtue of their size and variation and alternative approaches in administering child welfare services, will continually search for more flexibility and state-funding assistance. Altering either of these roles is difficult, if not impossible.

California, because of its large and growing population, requires a CWS budget methodology that accommodates changes in caseloads, innovative approaches, variations in county costs, and other factors, and which is regularly updated.

The basic child welfare service budget process currently used is workable and for the most part accommodates the vast diversity among California counties and requirements. With the workload revisions proposed and integration of other changes suggested in this study, the current budget methodology for basic child welfare services should be satisfactory and appropriate in the future.

3. Budget Methodology Recommendations

3.1. The service-based budget methodology (PCAB) is the most practical and workable approach and should be continued.

This study concludes that the current budget methodology for the development of county budget data is directed at providing counties adequate funds and the flexibility to expend them. The positive features in the current CWS basic budget methodology address differences in county salary and other costs. These positive features outweigh the complexity in the system. Revision not replacement is recommended.

Reliance on a service (i.e., caseload basis) for budget development is a reasonable approach at attempting to provide child welfare services funding where the need is greatest. While the current process can be improved it does recognize the differences in the costs of operating child welfare services in each county. The current methodology also incorporates necessary adjustments in the cost of doing business.

Development of the CWS/CMS has been directed at providing consistent, detailed caseload data. This caseload data should provide the best available data set for determining the amount of full-time equivalent employees necessary to adequately support child welfare service caseloads.

Regardless of the changes made in the current budgeting methodology, or for that matter adoption of a different budget methodology, federal cost reporting requirements will be unchanged.

3.2. The minimum standards service caseload factors as determined by the workload study should be used in place of the current standards.

Conclusions from the study recommending changes in workload staffing are contained in Section IV. c) Budget Review and Financial Modeling–Budget Review Findings. Most importantly, revising the caseload factors, upon which the budget is derived, applied to consistent county caseload data available from the CWS/CMS, can be expected to justify additional social workers. With the current methodology this increase in staffing will ultimately generate additional county child welfare services funding. The need for additional county funding provided the impetus for this study.

Procedures for counting more discrete units of service categories from CWS/CMS should be developed. Obtaining counts directly from CWS/CMS would greatly simplify any future time study efforts (see enhancements to CWS/CMS suggestions below).

3.3. Current budget methodology caseloads should be subject to additional specialized study in order to recognize the unique needs and additional time necessary to serve non-English speaking culturally diverse, and disabled or handicapped populations.

The current budget methodology for basic child welfare services provides a fair and justified basis for the appropriation of state funding for such services. Providing counties the maximum flexibility to administer the child welfare system needs to remain a primary goal associated with the current methodology. Additional study is needed to more adequately address the CWS workload requirements that these populations require.

3.4. Adjustments for new staff training time needs should be addressed.

Caseloads should be reduced for workers with less than six months' tenure based on the percentage of new workers in each county. As a recommended method, this can be accomplished by determining the proportion of new untrained caseworkers who have been with each county agency for no more than six months. A formula that adjusts for the noncase-related time for that component of the casework staff can then be applied in the county FTE allocations.

3.5. Historically based funding allocations for very small counties reduce unessential administrative overhead and should be expanded to include additional small counties.

Funding very small counties based solely on caseloads should be re-evaluated and consideration given for historical funding allocations. Such a practice currently is followed for two very small counties. Such an approach recognizes that the provision of minimum CWS requirements in very small jurisdictions may vary from staffing factors strictly based on caseload-driven workloads. Further, it reduces the workload for budget development at both the county and state level. Limiting such an approach to only two counties seems arbitrary. Several other very small counties could benefit from this approach because it would set a planning floor for county CWS staffing and budgets and would reduce the workload involved in the current process for these small

jurisdictions. Expanding the number of small counties, which receive historically based funding allocation, should therefore be considered.

3.6. State funding for new child welfare programs, including new prevention and collaborative initiatives, should be considered.

While not determinable by the workload study results, during the study county officials commented that efforts at prevention and collaborative services were difficult to justify and generally inadequately funded by the state. The state should evaluate these special programs and, if appropriate, consider basic or as a special premise funding for these programs.

The normal process for obtaining state funding for special child welfare initiatives or programs is to initially obtain state Social Services Department-level approval for the idea.

Once this occurs, the county then develops a special budget funding request, termed a budget premise, for specifically approved funding within the child welfare services budget, but not subject to the county, caseload-driven, budget model. Such a request requires usually a pilot program to fully demonstrate the value of the new program. An evaluation may also be required at program end.

If the program is successful, it can be continued as a specially funded approach or, a request for federal funding support through waivers, can be generated. With federal approval the program can be incorporated into the workload standards and basic budgeting process.

3.7. A Block Grant methodology should be subject to further evaluation and considered for a limited pilot test.

The simplest methodology for basic child welfare service funding would be to match county funding at a predetermined level with block grants of state funds. Since county child welfare claim data is submitted to the state for reporting and obtaining federal reimbursement, adequate data is available to determine a matched state appropriation.

Block grants can provide the advantage of simplicity in reducing state-level budget reviews and adjustments. They could permit counties to have wider latitude in program management and increased flexibility in operations and potentially better accommodate the diversity in county approaches in the provision of child welfare services. Counties would be able to arrive at, or forecast, state funding for child welfare services without concern for the mechanics of arriving at justified social worker staffing. Flexibility would be increased because counties could more fully integrate social service programs and use contract services not tied to social worker staffing.

The major impediment in moving to a workable system of block grants is the requirement for county compliance with state, and in some cases, federal mandates. For block grants to actually enable programmatic flexibility compliance relief from certain mandates would be critical. Even with block grants, the state would continue to be responsible for compliance with federal planning and reporting mandates. Balancing mandate compliance and waivers would require CDSS to more closely measure, monitor and review the performance of county programs at a high level of interest.

In addition, assuring the adequacy of program funding would require a new level of CDSS monitoring. Departing form caseload measurements and relying strictly on grant funding, over time could restrict or delay funding revisions for caseload changes. Under a block grant methodology counties would still be required to develop full social services budget detail data because CalWORKs, food stamps, and other county social service funding is dependent on this data.

A block grant approach would be a significant departure from the current approach in CWS basic funding. It would require a major shift in the current approach to state oversight, control and expenditure justification. It also requires a significant shift in compliance philosophy and the determination of actions or sanctions in the event county compliance is inadequate.

Because of the major changes entailed in a block grant approach for CWS funding any consideration of a block grant methodology would warrant an initial controlled and successful test prior to widespread implementation.

3.8. Consideration should be given to reviewing current state and county cost sharing ratios.

Clearly, CWS advocates have continued to justify budget additions and emergency allocations. However, some counties are unable to spend completely their state CWS budget allocation because they are unable to fund the required county fund match. Given this situation, consideration should be given to additional study of the current state and county CWS fund share ratio and county access to state funds.

3.9. Improve state and county budget communication.

Based on interviews and meetings with state and county officials, we concluded that communications on budgetary issues could be improved. Information regarding budgeting problems at the county level and of constraints at the state level, and clarification of budget policies and procedures could be facilitated with formal training

workshops or workgroup meetings. A budget workgroup with representatives from the state and counties meeting on an annual basis in advance of budget development could also serve to improve communications.

Other Actions Could Improve Budgeting for Child Welfare Services

- More frequent updating of workload factors would serve to assure child welfare services are based on the most realistic and current staffing factors.
- Development of a program that reports outcomes data would be useful in assessing budgets. Additional performance trend reporting of significant demographic data would also be useful.
- A study of the correlation in demographic factors and caseloads would be useful.

Best Practice Areas Recommendations

4. General Recommendations for Best Practice Areas

4.1. Several areas were designated for special study.

There were focus groups convened to (1) look at areas of service delivery not clearly addressed in the workload study of tasks, and (2) estimate the time needed to implement innovative approaches to service delivery that are being piloted by some counties. The services areas that required special study were:

4.1.1. Assessment of Relative/Kinship Homes

4.1.2. Health and Education Passport

4.1.3. Multilingual/Multicultural Services

4.1.4. Independent Living Program

4.1.5. Training Design

4.1.6. Response to Domestic Violence

4.1.7. The study examined the following areas of promising practice being implemented in one or more counties:

4.1.8. Family Unity Meeting/Family Group Conferencing

4.1.9. Healthy Start (School-based, school-linked services)

4.1.10. Structured Decision Making

4.1.11. Wraparound

4.2. Comparability of local programs should be assessed before they are included in the same special study.

4.3. For all special study subject areas consideration should be given as to how long programs or policies have existed in each county being studied.

Each area requires specialized study in order to measure the workload associated with implementing these practices. See Section IV. b) Special Studies–Focus Group Results for a

presentation of the focus groups findings and detailed recommendations for each of these areas. What follows is a preliminary set of recommendations for the special studies topic areas.

4.4. Specific Recommendations for Each Best Practice Area:

4.4.1. Incorporate the emergency response and family maintenance workload standards for Structured Decision Making (SDM) on a county specific basis.

4.4.2. The Wraparound Program area could benefit from a longitudinal study that assesses short and long-term outcomes for families served in the programs and **methodologies should include staff and partner agency interviews.**

4.4.3. Conduct a structured estimation time study for domestic violence programs that are supported under CalWORKs auspices.

4.4.4. Conduct either a structured estimation or time log time study for Independent Living and add Probation and Post-Emancipation as units of service for measurement.

4.4.5. Multicultural/Multilingual issues would best be addressed by a longitudinal study that identifies and assesses best practices (the Santa Clara model is an example worth examining further).

4.4.6. Use structured estimation and a staff shadow method to study Healthy Start programs.

4.4.7. For Health and Education Passports, conduct a lab study with a variety of cases using public health nurses and staff funded by CDHP and other funding sources.

4.4.8. Conduct a time study using counties who have implemented Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and cases that are identified as practicing FGDM using a best practice model.

4.4.9. Conduct a time study using a sample of counties and collect data from all staff involved in the Assessment of Relative Homes.

Other Recommendations

5. Other Recommendations

Equitable Staffing Allocation and Case Assignment

Equity of services to clients is important, but cannot be fully attained without equity of workload for staff. There are different types of workload equity issues: equity between individual workers and equity between groups, such as units/teams. There are workload equity issues around caseload mix and equity within the unit's caseload type. For example, there could be a question of workload equity between Emergency Response workers and Family Maintenance workers. In

counties where all Family Maintenance workers do not carry the same mix of case types, there could be a question of workload equity between Family Maintenance workers in the same unit or in different units.

For example, the workload of two workers each with the same size caseload could be quite unequal. If both workers have 20 cases and worker A's cases take 14 hours each per month to work and worker B's cases take 8 hours each, it is easy to see the disparity in workload despite equal caseloads. In this example, worker A would have to work 280 hours per month (20 cases x 14 hours), yet worker B would only have to work 120 hours per month (20 cases x 6 hours). If worker A and B each have a mix of the 14-hour and the 8-hour cases it is also easy to see that, depending on what the mix is for each worker, they could have quite unequal workloads when their caseloads are the same.

Workers in a specialized team may have inequity in workload for short periods of time due to one worker being assigned more cases than another. Over time, the unit supervisor will assign the worker with fewer cases more cases, thus the worker with more cases becomes the worker with the fewer cases. The constantly fluctuating workload will achieve equity over time rather than at a point in time. However, workers in a different unit may be experiencing greater numbers of case assignments due to circumstances in their area of the state or county. Such a condition could persist for years, resulting in a long-term inequity of workload for staff in the same type units.

5.1. Management Uses of the Data

5.1.1. Counties should consider using the formulas provided in the management of case assignment and monitoring to address workload equity.

Following the calculations expressed on the appropriate individual or group formula below will result in the monthly and daily undertime or overtime hours needed to work the caseload being analyzed. Undertime is the number of hours less than the total paid case-related hours per month, and overtime is the number of hours in excess of the case-related hours the worker is paid to work per month.

For example, the individual analysis on a worker that has not been assigned a full caseload might show that this individual would have 10 hours undertime (hours remaining at the end of the

month to spend on other activities) after working this caseload. The individual analysis on another worker might show that the individual would have to work 10 hours of overtime while working at the same level of effort as the other worker.

The Group Average Caseload Analysis Formula can be used to compare any size group, including groups of different sizes. The groups could be units, workers in the same or different counties of the state, or any other grouping of workers. The Individual Workload Analysis Formula, and the Group Average Workload Analysis formula below contain data based on the current, measured, workload study findings. However, the formulas can be updated at any time with either the minimum standard or the optimum standard data, or with new work measurement data. They can be used to analyze workload equity of the types described above to alert supervisors of inequity of workload between individual workers or workload inequities between groups. Persistent workload inequities between individual workers can be corrected with changes in case assignments and group inequities can be corrected with either case assignment or staffing allocation changes, or both. One must first be aware that an inequity exists and know the magnitude of the inequity. The formulas below can be used to determine workload inequities either per person or for a group of employees and to inform staff of their magnitude.

I N D I V I D U A L W O R K L O A D A N A L Y S I S F O R M U L A

Name_____ **Data** _____
Location_____

Services Used	Average Time*		% of Case Cases		# of of Time
Child Abuse Prevention	2.17	x	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Direct Services (CWS)	1.92	x	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Direct Services (Non-CWS)	7.66	x	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Planning (CWS)	1.49	x	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Planning (Non-CWS)	1.68	x	_____	=	_____
School/Center/Police-Based Prevention	2.89	x	_____	=	_____
Screening/Hotline/Intake	0.86	x	_____	=	_____
Investigation (ER)	6.77	x	_____	=	_____
Court Intervention (ER)	8.41	x	_____	=	_____
Dependency Investigation Activities	9.78	x	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation (FM)	4.05	x	_____	=	_____
Voluntary Services (FM)	5.32	x	_____	=	_____
Court-Ordered Services (FM)	6.78	x	_____	=	_____
Family Preservation & Support, Intensive HBS	9.97	x	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation (FR)	4.42	x	_____	=	_____
Work w Ch in Out-of-Home Care, Voluntary	3.54	x	_____	=	_____
Work w Ch in Out-of-Home Care, Court-Ordered	5.46	x	_____	=	_____
Services to Parents w Ch in O-of-H Care, Vol	3.20	x	_____	=	_____
Services to Parents w Ch in O-of-H Care, Ct Order	4.56	x	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation (PP)	2.07	x	_____	=	_____
Permanency Planning Assessment & Facilitation	2.29	x	_____	=	_____
Work with Child/Family/Guardian	2.26	x	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation O-of-H Care	3.45	x	_____	=	_____
Recruit, Inquiry, & Prelm Screeng of Lic FP&RH	1.18	x	_____	=	_____
Out-of-Town Inquiries (OTI)	1.31	x	_____	=	_____
Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children	1.89	x	_____	=	_____
Inter-County Work (Transfers & Courtesy Sup)	1.92	x	_____	=	_____
Home Study (Non-CWS) ordered by court	3.70	x	_____	=	_____

*The percent of case time used above is from the 1999 measured time

INDIVIDUAL WORKLOAD ANALYSIS FORMULA (Continued)

(Average % of Time Used) Total	_____
	- 100%
% Under/Overtime	_____
	÷ 100
(Casework Hours Available)	x116.1
= Average Monthly Under/Overtime Hours	_____
(Workdays per Month)	÷ 21.65
Average Daily Under/Overtime Hours	_____

GROUP AVERAGE WORKLOAD ANALYSIS FORMULA

Group_____ **Data** _____
Location_____

Services Average Time Used*		% of Case Cases		# of Workers		# of Time
Child Abuse Prevention	2.17	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Direct Services (CWS)	1.92	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Direct Services (Non-CWS)	7.66	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Planning (CWS)	1.49	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Collaborative/Planning (Non-CWS)	1.68	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
School/Center/Police-Based Prevention	2.89	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Screening/Hotline/Intake	0.86	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Investigation (ER)	6.77	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Court Intervention (ER)	8.41	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Dependency Investigation Activities	9.78	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation (FM)	4.05	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Voluntary Services (FM)	5.32	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Court-Ordered Services (FM)	6.78	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Family Preservation & Support, Intensive HBS	9.97	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation (FR)	4.42	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Work w Ch in Out-of-Home Care, Voluntary	3.52	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Work w Ch in Out-of-Home Care, Court-Ordered	5.46	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Services to Parents w Ch in O-of-H Care, Vol	3.20	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Services to Parents w Ch in O-of-H Care, CtOrder	4.56	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation (PP)	2.07	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Permanency Planning Assessment & Facilitation	2.29	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Work with Child/Family/Guardian	2.26	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Investigation/New Allegation O-of-H Care	3.45	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Recruit, Inquiry, & Prelm Screeng of Lic FP&RH	1.18	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Out-of-Town Inquiries (OTI)	1.31	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children	1.89	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Inter-County Work (Transfers & Courtesy Sup)	1.92	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____
Home Study (Non-CWS) ordered by court	3.70	x _____	÷	_____	=	_____

*The percent of case time used above is from the 1999 measured time

GROUP AVERAGE WORKLOAD ANALYSIS FORMULA (Continued)

(Average % of Time Used) Total	
	-100%
% Under/Overtime	
	÷ 100
(Casework Hours Available)	x116.1
= Average Monthly Under/Overtime Hours	
(Workdays per Month)	÷ 21.65
Average Daily Under/Overtime Hours	

5.2. Additional Related Research Recommendations

Enhancements to the CWS/CMS

The CWS/CMS is a valuable source of statewide data pertaining to case activity in California's child welfare services program. Among other key uses, it is the source of case volume data used for budgeting purposes. It was also instrumental in the implementation of the core workload study on which this report is based.

One of the limitations of CWS/CMS in the context of understanding workload requirements is that certain key services are not captured on the present version of the system. The system does not capture the detailed case types defined in this study as Units of Service. Other services not included are collaborative services, out-of-town inquiries, intercounty work, and court-mandated home studies. In addition, activity reflecting best practice areas such as SDM and Family Group Conferencing are not addressed by the system. This lack of information mean that the service-based budgetary model used to develop funding requirements and allocate funds to the counties cannot directly address these activities. Therefore, workload standards had to be combined into the broad service categories used in the budgetary process.

While CWS/CMS has an ad hoc reporting capability and standard program management reports, there is not a broad user base employing these capabilities, so that this functionality was not accessible during the study. Among other uses, such data is helpful in refining the workload standards requirements and allocating resources. For example, changes in duration over time have a significant impact on staffing requirements. Much of the data needed for these analyses are available in CWS/CMS, but their production is a complex activity. Unfortunately, this meant that these data were not available for use in informing the results of the study.

5.2.1. Review the service categories used in the workload study and consider enhancements to the CWS/CMS to capture service categories.

5.2.2. Develop more capacity to generate routine data on case entries, durations, and exits for all service categories.

Relating Outcomes to Workload

Outcome research can be a powerful linkage to work measurement data. Outcome studies designed to provide data on the results achieved by the department efforts for each case type can be linked with work measurement data to tell the costs of achieving alternative results. The outcomes data should be compatible with the case types used in the workload study. This would allow management decisions to focus on comparisons of the cost of one result versus the cost of another result, to help determine which course the department should take in the future.

5.2.3. Current efforts to develop outcome data for CWS need to be integrated analytically with workload data and subsequent workload studies.

Turnover and Retention

If turnover is too high, it may not be possible to achieve the staffing levels associated with the standards set by this study. Some turnover is circumstantial, and therefore not always manageable. For example, more turnover occurs when better paying jobs are available in the community. Higher turnover frequently occurs in less desirable areas to live in (some people take jobs in a less desirable areas until a job becomes available in a more desirable area), or staff leave quickly where a judge publicly berates them and/or treats them with disrespect. However, turnover is manageable to a large degree; therefore, it is recommended that the department, in collaboration with the counties, plan methods to assist the counties with staff retention as well as recruitment, in order to help achieve the recommended staffing levels.

Achieving the staffing levels indicated as needed by this study alone will reduce workloads and caseloads, and will thus go a long way toward retaining staff and making it easier to recruit staff. Staffing at the measured level will help some, staffing at the minimum level of the standards will help a lot, and staffing at the optimum level of the standards will help staff recruitment and retention tremendously. But these staffing levels may never be achieved without additional efforts directed at staff retention and recruitment. Therefore, it is recommended that the department devise and implement other approaches to staff recruitment and retention in addition to increasing staffing.

5.2.4. Consider vacancies in staffing and the effects on existing staff workload.

Simulation Modeling for Resource Decision Support

Computer simulation of case flows and case volumes can be a valuable tool for associating case-flow data, outcomes, workload, and costing. These models are used to forecast the behavior of the child welfare systems and then observe changes in the forecasted behavior based on the impact of changes of policy. Policy changes are observed in the form of changes in case volume, service duration, workload requirements, and outcomes such as maltreatment recurrence or service re-entry.

5.2.5. Develop a simulation model of CWS Basic for forecasting purposes.